

**OREGON AND WASHINGTON DEPARTMENTS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
**JOINT STAFF REPORT - FALL FACT SHEET NO. 9**  
**Columbia River Compact/Joint State Hearing**  
**October 2, 2012**

Fisheries Under Consideration:	Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Recreational Sturgeon upstream of Wauna Powerlines
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*Management guidelines, allocations, and preseason run forecasts for the 2012 fall season were presented in Fall Fact Sheet #1, dated July 26, 2012.*

**STOCK STATUS**

- Fall Chinook passage at Bonneville Dam through September 30 totals 328,000 adults, including 281,000 bright stock and 47,000 tule stock. Based on the average 10-year timing curve, adult passage is typically 94% complete by this date.
- Steelhead passage at Bonneville Dam through September 30 totals 209,400 fish. Based on the average 10-year timing curve, passage at Bonneville Dam (July-October) is typically 96% complete by this date.
- Coho passage at Bonneville Dam through September 30 totaled 41,100 early stock adults, compared to the preseason expectation of 60,200 fish. The counting period for late stock coho begins October 1.
- TAC has reviewed salmonid stock status weekly since August 27, and recently met on Monday (October 1) to provide the following updates:
  - Fall Chinook: 295,800 URBs, 75,200 MCBs and 60,800 BPH to the Columbia River. The inseason forecast is 87% of preseason for these components combined.
  - Upriver summer steelhead: 192,000 Group A (35% wild) and 24,700 Group B (20% wild). The total in-season forecast (216,700) is 59% of preseason.
  - Columbia River coho: TAC did not update coho today. The early coho return at Bonneville is final (through September 30) and is 41,100 compared to the preseason forecast of 62,000.
    - The Joint Staff is anticipating a smaller than predicted early coho run, based on harvest to date, limited escapement data and an updated ocean model with in-season ocean catch estimates.
    - The run size estimates used in the coho model range from 110,000 to 143,000 early coho and 69,000 late coho for a total return ranging from 179,000 to 212,000. Preseason forecasts were 184,600 early coho and 56,300 late coho (240,800 total return). The downgrade in the early run is based on information in hand and the upgrade in the late run is based on uncaught fish from ocean fisheries.

**NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL FISHERY REVIEW**

- The early fall commercial fishery is complete. The season included nine fishing periods during August, mainly in Zones 4-5. Catch included 23,600 Chinook, 300 coho and 1,000 white sturgeon.

- The late fall commercial fishery is currently underway. To date, a total of five periods have occurred and the sixth period is scheduled for this evening (October 2). All periods are conducted with an 8" minimum mesh restriction.

- A total of 527 sturgeon remained on the commercial guideline at the onset of the late fall season. Staff estimated catch would total 500 fish upon the conclusion of the September 27

2012 Non-Indian Commercial Fall Harvest Data (preliminary)							
Date	Hours	Zones	Del.	Chinook	Coho	Sturgeon	
Sep 19-20	10	4-5	117	4,129	219	71	
Sep 23-24	10	4-5	95	2,712	175	39	
Sep 25-26	10	4-5	64	1,748	155	56	
Sep 27-28	10	1-5	85	1,105	251	140	
Sep 30-Oct 1 (proj)	12	1-5		800	250	NA	
Oct 2-3 (proj)	12	1-5		600	250	NA	
<b>Late Fall Total (proj)</b>				<b>11,094</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>306</b>	
E. Aug Total				23,583	283	1,002	
Grand Total				34,677	1,583	1,308	

- period and retention was prohibited beginning September 30. Actual landings are tracking lower than expected resulting in a projected balance 221 sturgeon.
- A limited number of coho are available for commercial harvest. Preseason planning estimated. Considering observed mark rates in fisheries to date a total of 5,500 coho are available for all mainstem commercial fisheries even at the low end of the current forecast. Coho catch estimates (actual and projected) total 1,600 coho, leaving a balance of around 3,900 fish.
- Staff estimates that for the remainder of the fall season, sufficient numbers of URB Chinook are available for commercial harvest and LRH Chinook impacts will be minor.
- Considering results to date, staff is making the following recommendations:

<i>2012 Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Late Fall Fishery</i>		
Season	Open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday nights From October 4 through October 14. Open hours are 7 PM until 7 AM	(5 nights)
Area:	Zones 1-5.	
Sanctuaries:	Elokomin-A, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, Lewis-A, Washougal and Sandy rivers.	
Gear:	Drift gillnets only. 8" minimum mesh size restriction.  Nets fished any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net. If the net is attached to the boat, a lighted buoy on the end of the net opposite the boat is required.	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and sturgeon. Sturgeon possession and sales allowed October 4-12. A maximum of 2 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday). The white sturgeon possession and sales limit includes mainstem fisheries only. Sales of white sturgeon from fall Select Area fisheries is prohibited.	
Additional Rules:	<b>24-hour</b> Quick Reporting Rule will be in effect for Washington buyers.	

<b><i>2012 Non-Indian Mainstem Commercial Late Fall Fishery</i></b>		
Season:	Wednesday, October 10 Open hours are 6 AM until 6 PM	(12 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-5.	
Sanctuaries:	Elokomin-A, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, Lewis-A, Washougal and Sandy rivers.	
Gear:	Drift gillnets only. 6" maximum mesh size restriction, unslackened floater gill net.  Multiple net rule in effect, which means nets not specifically authorized for use in this fishery may be onboard the vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater. Nets fished any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net. If the net is attached to the boat, a lighted buoy on the end of the net opposite the boat is required.	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and sturgeon. A maximum of 2 white sturgeon may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel during each calendar week (Sunday through Saturday). The white sturgeon possession and sales limit includes mainstem fisheries only. Sales of white sturgeon from fall Select Area fisheries is prohibited.	
Additional Rules:	<b>24-hour</b> Quick Reporting Rule will be in effect for Washington buyers.	

- ✓ Catch expectations for the proposed seasons total 2,000-2,500 Chinook, 3,500-4,000 coho, and 200 sturgeon.
- ✓ Coho target fishing is recommended for the week of October 8 to target late hatchery fish returning to Cowlitz and Lewis rivers.
- ✓ Staff will monitor landings and Chinook stock composition as the proposed periods occur, and call for a Compact hearing if modifications are needed.
- ✓ The Joint Staff will not be recommending any additional fall season commercial fisheries.

### **NON-INDIAN ESA-IMPACT REVIEW**

- ✓ Non-Indian fisheries are mostly complete at this time, and additional impacts to ESA-listed stocks will be minor. ESA impacts shown below are projected through the end of the season (end of year for sport fisheries).
  - ✓ URB – 10.14% compared to guideline of 15%
  - ✓ LRH – 40.74% for ocean and in-river fisheries compared to guideline of 41%
  - ✓ LCN Coho – 14.9% for ocean and in-river fisheries compared to guideline of 15%
  - ✓ Wild Group B steelhead – 1.3% compared to guideline of 2%
  - ✓ Lower Columbia Chum - <2% compared to guideline of 5%

## RECREATIONAL STURGEON FISHERY REVIEW

### ***Recreational White Sturgeon Fishery Below Wauna***

- The 2012 retention fishery adopted for below Wauna is January 1 – April 30 (38-54 inch fork length) and May 12 – July 8 (41-54 inch fork length). The catch guideline for this fishery is 4,160 white sturgeon.
- Similar to recent years, catch and effort during January - May was low.
- Catch rates improved significantly in June, with daily harvest reaching over one hundred fish per day at times late in the month. On June 25, catch projections for the season estimated the guideline would be reached by July 3, five days prior to the scheduled closure date of July 8.
- The Compact met on June 28 and modified the season by adopting a closure date of July 5. At that time, catch projections for the season totaled 4,400 fish (105% guideline).
- The 5% overage was covered by using the balance remaining from the Willamette River allocation
- Season total catch include 4,466 sturgeon from 20,000 angler trips.

### ***Recreational White Sturgeon Fisheries Above Wauna***

- The 2012 retention fishery adopted for above Wauna includes a three day per week (Thu-Sat) season during January 1-July 31 and October 20-December 31 (38-54 inch fork length). The catch guideline for this area is 2,080 fish. Catch expectations totaled 200 fish harvested though July and 1,800 fish harvested Oct 20-December.
- Harvest during the January-July portion of the season was greater than expected. Through July, anglers kept an estimated 1,860 white sturgeon from 23,000 trips.
- The 2012 white sturgeon retention season in the lower Willamette River consisted of one 2-day opener on February 18-19 (38-54 inch fork length). The guideline for this area was 1,768. Actual catch totaled 1,535 fish.

2012 Recreational White Sturgeon Guidelines and Catch-Below Bonneville				
	Gorge	Estuary	Willamette	Total
Guideline	4,160	2,080	1,768	8,008
Harvest	4,466 ( <b>4,527</b> ) <sup>a</sup>	1,859	1,535	7,860 ( <b>7,921</b> ) <sup>a</sup>
Balance (38-54 FL)	-306 ( <b>-367</b> ) <sup>a</sup>	221	233	148 ( <b>87</b> ) <sup>a</sup>
%	109%	89%	87%	99%

<sup>a</sup> Below Wauna harvest with overage (306) converted to 38-54 FL equivalents.

- Based on the remaining balance of 87 white sturgeon for the area upstream of the Wauna powerlines, staff recommends the retention season (scheduled to start October 20) be rescinded.

<b><i>2012 Sturgeon Recreational Fishery for Above Wauna</i></b>
Rescind the previously adopted whites sturgeon retention season scheduled for October 20-December 31 in the area from Wauna powerlines upstream to Bonneville Dam.

- Based on the average December harvest during 2009-2011 of 22 fish (1,400 angler trips), the available balance would allow for a three day per week December retention fishery in the area upstream of Wauna powerlines.

### **FUTURE HEARINGS**

- The Joint Staff recommends a Compact hearing be scheduled for Monday, October 15 at 1 PM to consider additional non-Indian commercial fisheries.